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Disarmament Commission

254th meeting

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New York

Chairman: Mr. Maiolini ..... (Italy)

In the absence of the Chairman, Ms. Cedeño Reyes (Venezuela), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

General exchange of views (*continued*)

Mr. Pokotylo (Ukraine): At the outset, on behalf of the Ukrainian delegation, I wish to congratulate Mr. Maiolini on his assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission and to express our strong belief that his wisdom and experience will serve the interests of all delegations and help secure the long-awaited breakthrough in the consideration of agenda items. The delegation of Ukraine pledges its support and full cooperation in seeking progress in the work of the Commission.

Let me also take this opportunity to express our gratitude to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his comprehensive introductory statement.

Ukraine recognizes the importance of the Disarmament Commission as the specialized, deliberative forum within the United Nations that allows in-depth deliberations on and the examination of specific disarmament issues, leading to the development of concrete recommendations and thus facilitating negotiations on disarmament instruments. We are confident that the Commission has an increasingly important role to play in the promotion of arms control and non-proliferation.

In this regard, we would also like to stress the importance of further enhancing the dialogue and cooperation among the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission.

At this session the Disarmament Commission will continue to explore ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. The two documents before us provide a good basis for productive deliberations and the development of substantive proposals and recommendations. My delegation expresses its gratitude to the outgoing Chairpersons of the Working Groups for their efforts.

Nuclear disarmament remains one of the most important goals and disarmament challenges facing the international community. Regrettably, the growth of military expenditures, the uncertain future of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the absence of progress on nuclear disarmament, stagnation within the Conference of Disarmament and problems regarding the development of a fissile material cut-off treaty are only some of the features that characterize the present situation in this sphere.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are prerequisites for the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security. Ukraine, whose role in nuclear disarmament can serve as an example, remains among the strongest and most consistent supporters of the efforts aimed at attaining a nuclear-weapon-free world. At the same time, we

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recognize that the way to this goal is not easy or straightforward.

We agree with those delegations that have stated that reaching nuclear disarmament is not possible without the achievement of strategic stability, which should comprise economic, social, humanitarian and environmental factors. We are convinced that the role of nuclear weapons should be diminished in national security doctrines.

Nuclear disarmament should continue, including the entry into force and the implementation of the CTBT and the conclusion of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Preventing the weaponization of, and an arms race in, outer space should be included in the agenda of the international community.

Issues such as the reasons for possessing the existing numbers of nuclear weapons, an overview of today's deterrence concepts, the role to be played by non-strategic nuclear weapons, the transparency of nuclear weapons inventories and measures to promote the irreversibility of weapons reductions should be further discussed and thoroughly examined.

The delegation of Ukraine supports the proposal made by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, on the establishment of an international commission on weapons of mass destruction that would examine problems relating to the destruction, non-proliferation and terrorist use of such weapons and produce concrete recommendations in that respect.

Ensuring global security is not possible without regional and subregional stability. Mistrust creates an atmosphere of insecurity among States, which leads them to accumulate arms for self-defence. Ukraine believes that the relationship between confidence-building and reliance on conventional arms is an essential element to be taken into account in the process of consolidating peace and containing tensions.

Confidence-building measures continue to be effective tools both for preventing conflicts and for building peace in post-conflict situations. Proper implementation of confidence- and security-building measures has the potential not only to significantly enhance peace and stability but also to promote the process of arms limitation and disarmament, as well as a climate of social and economic integration and cooperation. At the same time, we agree that confidence-building measures should be applied on a voluntary and reciprocal basis, taking into account the specifics of each region and the nature of existing disputes and conflicts.

Ukraine has vast experience in implementing confidence- and security-building measures, at both the multilateral and the bilateral levels. Ukraine has now concluded bilateral agreements on such measures with the Slovak Republic, Hungary and Belarus. We continue to negotiate relevant agreements in this sphere with Romania, the Republic of Poland and the Republic of Moldova.

On 25 April 2002, the Republic of Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine adopted a document on confidence- and security-building measures in the naval field in the Black Sea. That document, which introduced a fundamentally new approach to the cooperation of States in the military and political areas, envisages the following main elements: cooperation and contacts in the naval field, invitations to naval bases, the exchange of naval information, annual naval exercises and a consultations mechanism. The implementation of the document by the six Black Sea States began on 1 January 2003.

In our view, it would be useful to include a reference to naval confidence- and security-building measures in the relevant chapter of the paper on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, on which, we hope, the Disarmament Commission can reach agreement by the end of this session.

Mr. Seetharam (India): On behalf of my delegation, allow me to congratulate Ambassador Maiolini on his election to chair the substantive session of the Disarmament Commission in 2003. The experience and expertise that he brings to this forum are indeed valuable for our deliberations. I assure the Chairman, and the Chairmen of the two Working Groups, of the constructive cooperation of my delegation in seeking a fruitful outcome during this session.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, on the initiatives and the energy that he brought to multilateral disarmament work over the past five years.

It is rather unfortunate that for reasons of logistics the Disarmament Commission was unable to hold a substantive session during 2002 to conclude the three-year cycle of work commenced in 2000. We are thus meeting now, at a time when the international security environment is under greater strain due to recent developments. The ongoing war in Iraq has called into question many assumptions that the international community used to take for granted, challenging the very Charter and the will of the United Nations. In these troubled times, some would express doubts about what the Disarmament Commission can really achieve or contribute in terms of pursuing peace and undiminished security for all. To my delegation, there is no doubt that the Disarmament Commission has to demonstrate, particularly at this time, the pressing need for the world to act collectively and multilaterally through a truly representative and universal forum to address issues of peace and security that concern us all. We need to look beyond the coalitions of the willing to address the problems that confront us and to re-establish the sanctity and credibility of norms that we can all collectively agree upon.

The subjects that we are dealing with — ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament, and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms — take on a greater sense of urgency and relevance in the current situation. It is important, therefore, that we conclude our work at this session with a spirit of mutual accommodation and cooperation.

During past sessions we reiterated India's resolve to remain committed to global nuclear disarmament and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified time frame.

The end of the cold war provided an opportunity to reduce the salience of nuclear weapons. Instead, we saw that most of the world acquiesced in manoeuvres to perpetuate forever the right of a handful of nations to retain their arsenals. The so-called unequivocal undertakings offered since then have proved to be part of an elaborate exercise in equivocation. The search for unilateral advantage has lead to measures that undermine the principle of the irreversibility of committed reductions. There is no move towards the collective renouncing of first use. Instead, there are prospects of the advocacy of pre-emptive use and a move towards developing new types of arsenals justified by new rationales. There is also a tendency to go back on commitments given regarding negative security assurances. The discriminatory non-proliferation regime is displaying cracks caused by its inherent flaws and seems destined to be confronted with threats to its very existence.

These developments, combined with the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, do not bode well for the prospects of early nuclear disarmament. The Disarmament Commission cannot afford to allow the drift to continue. It needs to set out a road map that indicates clearly the direction that all of us should take if we are to remain true to the objective of eventual nuclear disarmament.

At the 2001 session, India presented a working paper, contained in document A/CN.10/2001/WG.I/WP.3, which listed specific measures to help us achieve our objective. We are glad to note that some of the elements contained in our working paper have been reflected in the revised paper presented by the Working Group Chairman for our consideration this year. While commending this effort, let me reiterate that the Disarmament Commission should frame its recommendations and report in such a manner that the measures set out therein will be applicable universally, not merely to States parties to specific treaties or particular groups of like-minded countries. My delegation will be making appropriate suggestions in the coming days to ensure that a report from this forum truly reflects the universal character of the Disarmament Commission.

As an initiator of confidence-building measures in our own neighbourhood, India recognizes the usefulness of such measures in the field of conventional weapons for maintaining international peace and security. We also believe that it will be convenient to have a set of guidelines — many such guidelines already exist — and examples in an easily available form that can be drawn upon by interested parties, who would do so voluntarily while adapting them to their particular set of circumstances, as appropriate.

There are also significant multilateral arrangements in the field of conventional arms, and promoting adherence to them is a confidence-building measure. India plays an active role in the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) process, having ratified all of its Protocols, including amended

Protocol II. We are also engaged in implementing the Programme of Action agreed upon at the International Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and we look forward to the first biennial conference, to be held in New York in July this year. Ratification of the CCW Protocols by more countries and effective implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons would improve trust and confidence.

While considering a list of possible measures, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that building confidence between countries is a process in which considerable time and effort have to be invested. The transparency and predictability inherent in specific measures need to be sustained over a considerable period in a manner that generates confidence in the sincerity of the intentions of concerned parties. The effectiveness of unilateral, bilateral, regional or multilateral measures can be measured only in terms of the sincerity of intentions that they collectively convey.

The revised paper presented by the Chairman of the Working Group provides a sound basis for useful work to be concluded at this session.

At a time when the very concept of multilateralism in the context of disarmament is under threat, the Disarmament Commission will naturally be buffeted, pulled and pressured by different sides. However, this institution cannot afford to succumb to such attempts. Our efforts should be to conclude the work we have undertaken for the current three-year cycle, thus making an important contribution to international peace and security. The Commission will not find my delegation lacking the spirit of cooperation and accommodation required for completing our task.

Mr. Erendo (Mongolia): My delegation joins previous speakers in congratulating the Chairman and other members of the Bureau on their elections. I am confident that under the leadership of Mr. Maiolini, the Commission will be able to elaborate useful recommendations that will serve as the basis for further deliberations at the forthcoming General Assembly on the two important issues under consideration.

I would also like to thank Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala for his introductory statement, which was, as usual, lucid. Through his longstanding involvement in and dedication to the cause of disarmament in his capacity as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Dhanapala has made a significant contribution to enhancing the role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

My delegation fully subscribes to the views expressed by the representative of Indonesia, who made a statement on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. However, I would like to make a few additional comments reflecting the position of my delegation.

We are meeting at an important juncture in international relations. Despite the concerted efforts of the international community, the spread of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery have not been curbed. The eleventh of September opened our eyes to the risk of ill-intentioned non-State actors obtaining access to these weapons. Therefore, securing strict observance and effective implementation of all international agreements has become the utmost priority of the international community. Without such a commitment and full compliance, the goals of Millennium Declaration — to free peoples from the scourge of war and to eliminate the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction — will remain a mere declaration of good intent.

We firmly believe that nuclear disarmament is the key not only to resolving a wide range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues, but also to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security. In this context, my delegation attaches special importance to universal adherence to, and the preservation of the integrity of, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. The creeping retreat from nuclear disarmament to which the Under-Secretary-General referred should not erode the credibility and effectiveness of the NPT.

During the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the States parties to the Treaty committed themselves to implementing the recommendations and practical steps contained in its Final Document. However, one the important recommendations — namely, to establish an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal specifically with nuclear disarmament issues — has not yet been implemented. The Conference on Disarmament, unfortunately, has not been able to agree on a programme of work or to start substantive work on many pressing disarmament issues.

My delegation, like many others, would like to see the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and calls upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Treaty and to accede to it as soon as possible.

We also believe that the conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty is an immediate task facing the Conference on Disarmament. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, speaking before the Conference two years ago, proposed that, pending negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty, the nuclear-weapon States declare a moratorium on the production of weapons-grade fissile material and promote greater transparency through disclosure of their present stocks. He also urged the United Nations to establish a Register for all stocks of weapons-grade fissile material. We believe that this proposal remains timely and valid.

Mongolia believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has a positive impact on regional security and stability. Mongolia, as a nuclear-weapon-free country, has adopted the necessary legislative acts at the national level and is now working on the institutionalization of its nuclear-weapon-free status at the international level. My delegation is confident that the Chairman's working paper on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament will facilitate the Commission's deliberations during its current session.

My delegation hopes that the Disarmament Commission will be able to work out concrete recommendations on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms. We believe that, although confidence-building measures by themselves do not represent practical disarmament, they create an environment conducive to disarmament negotiations and increased trust and interaction among States. There are many examples of regional and subregional or bilateral confidence-building measures which contribute to stability and security and complement international arms control agreements.

As the Under-Secretary-General pointed out in his introductory remarks, issues related to the reduction of conventional arms are extremely complex

> "because it is legitimate for States to possess such weaponry for their self-defence purposes and because commercial and political motivations frequently underlie their continued production, perfection and export." (*see A/CN.10/PV.251*)

Ambassador Maiolini, our Chairman, cautioned us in his eloquent opening statement that we should avoid the temptation to be overambitious. My delegation fully shares your view in this respect, but I should like to add that we should also be tenacious in achieving our goals.

Mr. Konuzin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation is delighted to welcome Mr. Maiolini to his post and is prepared to cooperate closely with him at this session of the Disarmament Commission.

The twenty-first century has ushered in new trends as well as new challenges in the development of international relations. We are convinced that countering these new and modern challenges will be possible only through consolidated efforts on the part of the international community. As we see it, we must discuss the building of a democratic world order that would guarantee the harmonious combination of different approaches and the interests of States that are not always concordant, in order to maintain and strengthen comprehensive strategic stability, in order to create a new, multi-component security system.

The unilateral use of military force, in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations and in violation of the principles of international law, could undermine the system of international security and encourage individual countries to possess weapons of mass destruction.

In this connection, we believe that the war in Iraq is a serious political mistake. One of the most effective multilateral mechanisms was, and remains, arms control and disarmament. To date, thanks to the collective efforts of the international community, a solid basis of international law for strategic stability has been created. I would refer here to agreements that have stood the test of time, such as START I; the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Biological Weapons Convention; the Chemical Weapons Convention; the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe; treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones; and a number of other agreements.

Russia supports the further strengthening and development of the norms of international law for strategic stability and international security. We believe in political and diplomatic methods for resolving disarmament problems, at forums such as the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, as well as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. We are convinced that the potential of these forums is far from having been exhausted and could be used to great effect.

There is no alternative to our joint work in this area, because taking another path, such as the military one, is not a way to resolve problems of disarmament and strengthening non-proliferation regimes.

Questions of nuclear disarmament are priorities for Russia. Our country not only declares its commitment to the ultimate goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons as well as to the conclusion of a treaty on comprehensive complete disarmament under strict and effective international control, but is also taking consistent steps in the area of nuclear disarmament. We have ratified and are implementing all treaties aimed at real nuclear disarmament.

The conclusion of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between Russia and the United States and the signing of the Russian-American Joint Declaration on a New Relationship were major steps forward in the field of nuclear disarmament that are very important for the establishment of an international security system in the twenty-first century. The Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions provides for continuity in the process of disarmament and arms control at a time when the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty is no longer valid and the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START II) is no longer relevant, and when other disarmament agreements are being seriously tested. The new Treaty is intended to provide significant assistance in strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We note that there has been a certain amount of progress in the nuclear disarmament field and in compliance with the obligations set forth in article VI of the NPT. Russia believes that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons will be possible only if there is incremental progress — based on a comprehensive approach, with the participation of all nuclear Powers — and, of course, if strategic stability is maintained.

In that connection, I wish to emphasize the abiding importance of the NPT as a major instrument of international law aimed at containing the threat of nuclear weapons proliferation, and thus as a factor for regional and global stability. Accordingly, we believe that the review process must be ensured at the appropriate level for a successful Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT in 2005.

A key element of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. We therefore believe it is extremely important that all countries — primarily those on which the Treaty's entry into force depends — sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Russia continues to advocate the speedy elaboration and conclusion of an international convention to combat acts of nuclear terrorism. In our view, we must increase interaction among international and national organizations to counter the illegal trade in nuclear and radioactive materials, devoting attention to strengthening the database related to the illicit trade in such materials. A key element of reducing the geographical area of nuclear-weapon possession is the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world.

I should now like to express our satisfaction at the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The Agency has significantly strengthened its safeguards system, and now it is an important element of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and provides the level of confidence needed for cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We support the IAEA's International Project on Innovative Nuclear Reactors and Fuel Cycles, which is in line with the initiative of Mr. Putin, President of the Russian Federation, to elaborate stable nuclear technologies that are not subject to proliferation.

We believe that as we consider this subject, we must not overlook the problem of delivery systems, which are a necessary component of nuclear weapons. The launching at The Hague of the International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation was an important measure in this area. In that connection, I should also like to refer to the well-known Russian initiative to establish a global monitoring system for

the non-proliferation of missiles and of missile technology, which provides for non-discriminatory, equal participation by all interested States under United Nations auspices.

Nuclear disarmament — particularly the reduction of strategic offensive weapons — is inherently linked to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. For that reason, I wish to draw the Commission's attention to the Russian-Chinese initiative to elaborate a comprehensive agreement to prevent the launching of weapons into outer space and the use or the threat of use of force against space objects. We call for the immediate commencement of work in that area by the Conference on Disarmament within the context of a balanced programme of work.

In that connection, we should like to inform the Commission that Russia has already begun to implement its previously announced initiative to provide advance warning about the launching of space objects, their intended purpose and their basic parameters. Such information is available on the web site of the Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. We call upon States that launch objects into outer space to join in implementing that confidence-building measure.

An examination of the defence policies of the overwhelming majority of the world's States clearly shows that conventional weapons continue to occupy a place in their arsenals. As military technology develops, conventional weapons are acquiring more sophistication, new qualities and, in certain cases, far greater strike capabilities.

In the field of conventional arms control, Russia stresses in particular that the viability and effectiveness of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) must be preserved and strengthened. In that connection, we accord top priority to the prompt entry into force of the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty, signed at Istanbul on 19 November 1999, which we believe should be ratified without any artificial delay. As far as the Russian side is concerned, President Putin has submitted the Agreement to the State Duma for ratification. As the Commission is aware, the process of expanding NATO has been under way for the past several years. Therefore, Europe's security interests would be enhanced by prompt accession to the Agreement on Adaptation of the CFE Treaty by all European States that are not yet parties to it and that intend to join NATO.

Russia also attaches great importance to confidence-building measures in Asia. On 15 July 2001 the Presidents of Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Russia signed a declaration on the establishment of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, which seeks to promote the interaction of our countries in various areas, including security, good-neighbourliness and counter-terrorism.

Problems associated with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons are an important aspect of conventional arms control. The United Nations should play a leading role in tackling those problems. In that connection, we believe that there is a need for a global approach and for harmonization of the efforts of all States in establishing a mechanism for international cooperation in this field within the context of implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We also believe that it is necessary to focus the international community's primary effort on combating illegal shipments of small arms and light weapons, which are the main source of arms to illegal armed groups, terrorist organizations and the Governments of States under United Nations embargoes. In that regard, we commend the overall functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as a confidence-building measure. As we see it, its function is to identify possible instances of potentially destabilizing build-ups of conventional weapons.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that Russia attaches great importance to the success of the work of the Disarmament Commission. The agenda for this session contains complex but extremely important items. There is no unified approach on the part of States with regard to these questions, but there is a real possibility that differences can be narrowed significantly. The Russian delegation will work to achieve that goal.

Ms. Jarbussynova (Kazakhstan): Allow me to join others in congratulating Ambassador Maiolini on his election as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission at its 2003 session. I would also like to extend our felicitations to the other members of the Commission's Bureau on their election to their posts. I wish further to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Diane Quarless of Jamaica for her competent work as Chairperson. Allow me also to thank Under-

Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanaala for his comprehensive presentation to the Commission and for his tireless efforts and excellent work asthe head of the Department for Disarmament Affairs during the past five years.

At its final session of the current three-year cycle, the Disarmament Commission will corinue to discuss the agenda items on ways and means toachieve nuclear disarmament and on practical conidence-building measures in the field of conventional ams. It will have at its disposal two working document that provide a good basis for conducting constructive and in-depth deliberations. Both items are very important for Kazakhstan, which, along with othr countries, is making practical contributions in thoe two complex areas.

I would like to underscore that nuclear disarmament is both the policy and oe of the goals declared by Kazakhstan at its indepedence. Nuclear disarmament also has special meaningfor my country. Instead of giving rise to new life, ourrich and fertile soil was used for 40 years to conduct nuclear tests, turning it into a nuclear wastelan and bringing suffering to the more than 100,000 pople who were directly affected.

It is quite understandable that after the last nuclear warhead was removed fromthe territory of Kazakhstan, in April 1995, and after te elimination of the remaining nuclear devices at the Smipalatinsk test site, on 31 May 1995, our country ecame the first State voluntarily to refuse to possess uclear weapons. That positive contribution in the fieldof disarmament was reflected in the Final Documet of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to te Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon, as well as in the section of the Chairman's workingpaper pertaining to achievements and developments at te unilateral and bilateral levels.

Kazakhstan's current nuclear-wapon-free status serves to secure stability alon its borders. Recognizing the vital importance of egional security and stability to the achievement of lobal peace and development, Kazakhstan devotes geat attention to realizing the initiative to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. In its resolution 57/69, of 22 November 2002, the General Assemby welcomed the decision by five Central Asian Stes to sign the Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zoe treaty as soon as possible. We are confident that such zones in Central Asia and other regions will constitute an important step towards strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime and promoting general and complete disarmament. In that regard, we would like to thank the Government of Japan for its support of this idea. We also greatly appreciate the work of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

The establishment of concrete and practical confidence-building measures is very useful in easing regional tensions, as they are a powerful instrument in generating mutual trust through dialogue and in promoting security through cooperation. Kazakhstan pursues a policy of constructive cooperation and has created a belt of security and good neighbourliness along its borders. Along with China, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan, Kazakhstan signed an agreement in 1996 on military confidence-building measures in border areas, as well as an agreement on mutual reductions in military forces in border areas.

As a previous speaker has mentioned, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan signed the Declaration declaring the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization on 15 June 2001. Within the Shanghai six framework, those six countries decided to assist one another in the security, political, economic, cultural and anti-terrorism fields through consultation and cooperation on an equal footing. We in Kazakhstan believe that the Shanghai Cooperation Organization can become an effective tool in ensuring security and stability in the region.

While fully abiding by its commitments under important international instruments, Kazakhstan is working consistently to create security structures on the Asian continent. The holding of the first summit-level meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA), which was convened at Almaty in June of last year, has advanced that goal. The heads of the major Asian States came together for the first time ever to express their political will and interest in the joint search for ways to strengthen peace and stability in the Asian region. The summit meeting's adoption of the final document — the Almaty Act on the institutionalization of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia — and of the declaration on

eliminating terrorism and promoting dialogue among civilizations was of great significance. Kazakhstan would like to express its appreciation to CICA member States for their efficient work. We call on all interested States to continue efforts to implement confidence-building measures in Asia.

Transparency in the field of conventional arms control and reduction provides a good basis for preventing the destabilizing build-up of weapons in any region and the excessive concentration of weapons in any State.

Kazakhstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, providing information on a regular basis since 1992 and considering the Register to be the most important component of such control. We also welcome the broadest participation of States Members of the United Nations in the functioning of that important international instrument.

My delegation welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 57/63 on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. In the present situation, we should support the role of the Disarmament Commission as the sole multilateral, deliberative body on disarmament. In this regard, I would like to assure members of our full support for efforts aimed at achieving the success of the Disarmament Commission. We are ready to strengthen cooperation with all the delegations of member States to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Stagno (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, and the other members of the Bureau on your well-deserved election to lead the work of the Disarmament Commission. I can assure you of my delegation's support as you guide our work to a successful conclusion.

I also wish to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his valuable statement to the Commission and for the leadership and professionalism he has shown in all his initiatives on behalf of disarmament.

Costa Rica has a long tradition of and experience in promoting the disarmament agenda. In 1949, with the constitutional abolition of our armed forces, we declared peace on the world. We entrust our security to the mechanisms of international law. We give priority to promoting social development as the appropriate basis of legitimate civil security. We trust that all nations will adopt measures to ensure general and complete disarmament in order to guarantee worldwide security.

The commitments undertaken in the field of disarmament are clearly defined and cannot lend themselves to interpretation. In 1970, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), under article VI of the Treaty, undertook

> "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control".

Unfortunately, almost 25 years later, the States parties, which renounced nuclear weapons in good faith, have yet to see any real progress towards halting the arms race or the speedy disarmament of nuclear Powers. In 1995, at the NPT Review and Extension Conference, the nuclear States promised to begin negotiations on prohibiting the production of fissile material for use in weaponry and to make systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate such weapons.

In 2000, they committed themselves to the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals, to the principle of the irreversibility of the reduction of those arsenals, to reducing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and to strengthening verification mechanisms. Regrettably, those commitments have not been met. Weapons of mass destruction continue to proliferate and conventional weapons still abound. Moreover, since 1946 the Security Council has been unable to ensure compliance with the obligations and responsibilities emanating from Article 26 of the Charter, which states that

> "the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments".

True security can be achieved only by means of the reduction in the number and a gradual and universal elimination of all weapons. Nuclear disarmament is an

ineluctable commitment. As has been clearly stated by the International Court of Justice,

> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects." (*resolution 57/85, para. 1*)

In this context, we welcome the fact that the Commission's agenda includes two essential items: "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament" and "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms". What is more, the fact that this Commission is deliberating on those essential topics is irrefutable proof that a great deal remains to be accomplished in those regards.

The ratification of and general and full respect for legal instruments already in force on nuclear proliferation are essential steps towards compete nuclear disarmament. In this context, the speedy entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is the best possible guarantee against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We therefore regret that 13 nuclear countries have yet to ratify that instrument.

It is similarly essential for all States to ratify and adhere to the NPT. Costa Rica appeals to States that have not yet done so to do so as soon as possible. We call on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply with the provisions of that international instrument. We urge nuclear countries that are not parties to adhere to that legal instrument and to renounce the development and possession of nuclear weapons.

We urge all nations to place their nuclear facilities under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. In this regard, we deem it equally necessary to strengthen that Agency with a view to enhancing its verification capacity and to creating an effective system to guarantee the physical protection of nuclear material.

The nuclear-weapon States have a special obligation to commit themselves to disarmament negotiations. They must adopt a policy of no first use, deactivate their offensive systems and take them off standby alert, and refrain from developing any nuclear arsenals. All such States must begin the progressive, systematic and resolute dismantling of their arsenals of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that the terms of the 2002 Moscow Treaty could be expanded to include the destruction and elimination of missiles and a binding timetable for deactivation to guarantee gradual and irreversible disarmament.

In the medium-term, we believe it essential to adopt a universal, legally binding instrument, such as the draft convention on the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, loan, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction, as distributed by my delegation in document A/C.1/52/7.

As a State party to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean and a member of the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, we trust that the extension and creation of new geographical areas of that nature will promote peace and global security.

With regard to confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms, Costa Rica considers it indispensable to regulate the trade of and trafficking in weapons. These activities are responsible for the proliferation of conventional weapons. That industry, whose existence depends on war, has turned death into a business.

Indeed, greater transparency is needed in the international weapons market. Regulatory machinery must be improved. Sales licenses, destination or final user guarantees and other monitoring practices are clearly insufficient. Arms embargoes imposed by the United Nations are frequently violated, weapons transfers are not always reported and gray and illicit weapons markets still exist.

The regulation of this lethal trade, which transcends borders, requires robust international law. To that end, Costa Rica has been promoting the adoption of a framework convention on the transfer of arms. The adoption of this initiative — which seeks to prohibit the transfer of military materiel and personnel and to eliminate financial and logistic support for States whose military, police or paramilitary units participate in or contribute to violations of human rights, war crimes and crimes against humanity — would be an effective confidence-building measure in the field of conventional weapons. We urge all Member States committed to secure and lasting peace to support this proposal. As well, we consider that it is necessary to strengthen the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

At the regional level, I wish to underline the importance of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions adopted by the Organization of American States in June 1999.

The United Nations must play an essential role in the definition and implementation of disarmament agreements and confidence-building measures. We believe that multilateralism is the only effective path for achieving disarmament and preventing proliferation. For that reason, my delegation attaches special importance to the Disarmament Commission, as it is the only multilateral deliberative organ of a truly universal nature with the capacity to promote disarmament in all its aspects.

Mr. Pak Gil Yon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): On behalf of the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, I would like, first of all, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship and express my belief that your diplomatic skill and rich experience will contribute to the work of the current session.

The challenges and difficulties facing the international community grow ever more complex and intricate. A new century has arrived, but domination and hegemony continue to exist. High-handedness and arbitrariness continue to pose a major threat to international peace and security.

Due to the high-handedness and arbitrariness prevalent in international relations, the principles of justice and fairness are often disregarded, and the principle of sovereign equality, the lifeline of United Nations activities, is shaken to its very foundation. Moreover, we have recently seen the grave situation caused when the internal affairs of sovereign States are intervened in by force.

Today, the international community has to choose one of the following two options: whether the twenty-first century will be a century of independence, equality and peace or a century of high-handedness and arbitrariness. If we choose the latter, all countries with weak national defence capabilities will be placed in a position of vulnerability to bombings, as is the case of Iraq.

It was a grave encroachment upon the sovereignty of Iraq that the United States unilaterally launched a military attack on Iraq despite the strong opposition of the United Nations and the world. The violation of Iraqi sovereignty began with the demand for its disarmament by inspection, gradually leading to war. The unilateral demand for the disarmament of a sovereign State is itself a wanton encroachment upon that country's sovereignty. The encroachment upon sovereignty by military attack is the most vivid expression of the violation of the rights of the people of that country.

Countries that in the past liked to call for the protection of human rights are directly joining the current armed attack or are conniving at it. Such a doctrine of strength and hypocrisy disturbs the international order, while seriously threatening peace and security not only in the Middle East but also in the rest of the world.

The United States is now openly asserting that the basic aim of its war on Iraq is to overthrow the Iraqi leadership. It began its military attack on Iraq with a surprise strike intended to kill the Iraqi President and is now leaving no stone unturned to put that plan into practice.

The arrogant and outrageous behaviour of the United States, which adopted as its national policy the killing of the State leader of another country is typical State terrorism, which can never be tolerated. It is the full right of a country's people to elect their leader. No one has granted the United States the right to change the regime of other countries, and there is no sovereign State in the world that would allow such brigandish State terrorism on the part of the United States.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is opposed to war. War against the independence of a sovereign State and human rights can never be justified.

The major threat and challenge to world peace and security lies in power politics based on the absolute supremacy of nuclear weapons. Manifestations of that can be found in the recent change from nuclear deterrence theory to pre-emptive strikes and the open clamour of nuclear threats.

As long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, humankind can never be free from nuclear threats. The core issue of disarmament is nuclear disarmament, and the disarmament process can properly proceed only when nuclear disarmament is achieved; this includes, inter alia, the prohibition of the use or threat of use of

nuclear weapons and the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In that regard, my delegation urges the early conclusion of an international agreement that clearly outlines the obligations of both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States with respect to the prohibition of the development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer, use and threat of use of nuclear weapons and to the complete destruction of all nuclear weapons. Pending the conclusion of such an agreement, priority should be given to obtaining assurances on the non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States and on the withdrawal of all nuclear weapons deployed outside national territory, thus removing the nuclear threat and promoting the nuclear disarmament process.

Disarmament cannot be unilateral, and it should be conducted on the basis of mutual respect and trust among States. Real disarmament can never be expected in an environment of continued hostile relations between States and of the increased threat to sovereignty caused by listing Member States as part of an "axis of evil" and calling for pre-emptive strikes.

Furthermore, it is unreasonable to insist on reducing the defensive forces of other countries while deploying abroad a huge armed force and vast numbers of weapons of mass destruction, and even developing new types of nuclear weapons. My delegation considers it urgent now to adopt an effective programme of action for comprehensive disarmament, including nuclear disarmament.

The large-scale joint military exercises being staged by the United States and South Korea have created such a tense situation on the Korean peninsula that a nuclear war may break out there at any moment. What merits serious attention is that sabre-rattling targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is being staged in earnest, timed to coincide with the United States attack on Iraq. That clearly proves that the United States win-win strategy, a key link in the chain of its strategy to dominate the world by holding a strong upper hand, is being put into practice on the Korean peninsula.

There is a growing danger from the Foal Eagle and the Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSOI) joint military exercises, as the United States deployed unusually large combat forces equipped with sophisticated weapons to the exercises. They involved hundreds of thousands of troops and various types of modern combat hardware — enough to wage a full war.

The United States has already transferred 24 B-52 and B-1 fighter bombers to the western Pacific region. It also deployed six F-117 Stealth fighters, which were in an air force base in the state of New Mexico, to South Korea on 13 March and, at the same time, mobilized a wing of F-15 fighters — the backbone of its air force.

Most serious of all, it brought the super-sized aircraft carrier Carl Vinson — dubbed the "Gold Eagle" — with 80 of the latest deck-based planes on board, to a South Korean port on 14 March. The United States dispatch of that carrier — the third largest in the United States navy — to the Foal Eagle and RSOI exercises to play a major role exposes its operational intention to carry out the largest-ever joint military exercises and to threaten and stifle the Democratic People's Republic of Korea by force.

The United States and South Korea have unceasingly staged war exercises against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. But this is the first time that they have staged one-month-long war exercises, mobilizing such large numbers of troops and quantities of modern operational equipment throughout South Korea.

Although it is staging exercises in the sky, at sea and on land, the United States is concentrating its efforts on carrying out its aerial strategy in particular. This means that it is going to mount a pre-emptive attack on nuclear facilities in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and use it as opportunity to escalate the war. The United States has so far put international pressure on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to scrap its nuclear weapons programme, claiming that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea nuclear issue poses a threat to the world. As that has not worked with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the United States is now going to settle the issue by military means.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has exerted sustained and sincere efforts to peacefully resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula through dialogue and negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. But the United States, which is defying those efforts and has turned down the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's proposal for the conclusion of a

non-aggression treaty, went to the length of staging the largest-ever war exercises, intended to set the zero hour of its pre-emptive attack, thereby driving the military situation in Korea to the brink of nuclear war.

As is well known, given its origin, nature and substance, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is a bilateral matter that should be settled by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States. It is entirely a product of the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The United States is claiming that its unilateral demand represents the common position of the international community, while describing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's restarting its frozen nuclear facilities and withdrawing from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a breach of international law. This is mere sophistry; it is a crafty attempt to equate the assailant with the victim.

The nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula should be resolved by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States; no other party is entitled to intervene in this bilateral matter. Intervention by any other party in this matter at this point will only create difficulties and complications, and erect obstacles to the resolution of the issue, rather than help to resolve it in any way.

The XIII Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in Kuala Lumpur last February, clarified its position on this issue. The most reasonable way of settling the issue is for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States — the parties which are directly concerned with the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula — to sit face to face and negotiate. Such a stance — clarified at the summit of the non-aligned countries, which make up the majority of the countries of the world — fairly represents the position of the international community with regard to the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula. This is a strong rebuff to the United States, which is insisting on multilateral talks in a bid to internationalize the nuclear issue, while turning down the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's consistent call for a negotiated settlement between the parties directly concerned.

The Korean people are strongly independence-minded; independence means life for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. No threat or blackmail, no pressure or sanctions, will ever work on us. Our people will never beg for peace at the expense of our national dignity and sovereignty simply out of fear of war, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will never sell out its supreme interests under pressure.

The United States should not boast about its military muscle. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has a powerful self-defence and national defence capacity that is enough to beat back any formidable enemy at a single stroke. The United States would be well advised to clearly understand the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's capacity for self-defence and the single-hearted unity of its people.

If the United States finally ignites a nuclear war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, defying its efforts to peacefully settle the nuclear issue, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will mercilessly punish the aggressors in order to protect the sovereignty of the nation and its right to exist, pursuant to the army-based policy.

Before South Korea talks about the nuclear issue, it should refrain from encouraging confrontation between the north and the south and from aggravating the situation on the Korean peninsula in contravention of the spirit of the North-South Joint Declaration of 15 June 2000.

Today, there is no reason for fellow countrymen to strain the situation and disturb the peace, as the north and the south are heading for reconciliation, unity and reunification. It can be said that there exists on the Korean peninsula at present only confrontation between the Koreans in the north and the south and the United States.

Nevertheless, it is an anachronistic act of sycophantic treachery for South Korea to have proclaimed throughout South Korea a state of high alert such as can be seen only on the eve of war, while raising a hue and cry over possible provocation from the north, which has nothing to do with the Iraqi war.

South Korea is pushing the situation to the brink of war and siding with outsiders, instead of cooperating and standing by its fellow countrymen, who are exposed to the threat of outside aggression. This cannot but be thrice-cursed perfidy towards compatriots and cursed treachery towards the nation.

The very party which should cooperate with its fellow countrymen to avert a new war in the face of the dangerous moves of the United States aimed at provoking a nuclear war is leading the situation to the brink of war, faulting its fellow countrymen for no reason. This amounts to nothing less than adding fuel to the flames of a war kindled by outsiders. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot but express deep concern about the irrevocable adverse impact that such reckless sabre-rattling in South Korea will have on peace on the Korean peninsula and on inter-Korean relations.

South Korea will be held wholly responsible for having hamstrung inter-Korean reconciliation and cooperation and having laid obstacles in the way of achieving peace and the peaceful reunification of the country. We, together with all our fellow countrymen, will not remain mere onlookers with respect to the serious developments in South Korea.

If South Korea wants peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and genuine reunification of the country, it should approach the nuclear issue fairly and impartially, and not follow the unilateral assertion of the United States. It should encourage the conclusion of a non-aggression treaty between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States as the best way to resolve the problem created on the peninsula. South Korea would be well advised to heed the warnings of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will continue all of its sincere efforts to resolve the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula and to achieve the region's denuclearization.

I wish to take this opportunity to express our profound thanks to the Governments and the peoples of many countries for extending their support and encouragement for the principled position and sincere efforts of the Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to resolve the nuclear issue.

The delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will work in a spirit of sincerity with other delegations for the success of discussions on the items on the agenda of the current session.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Mr. Chairman, it is a pleasure to see you, a skilled and experienced diplomat from a great country — a country with 5,000 years of history, replete with triumphs and glories. In particular, it is a pleasure to see you, a good friend, presiding over the Disarmament Commission at a time which presents great challenges to the international community and, at the same time, offers significant opportunities. The Disarmament Commission is also fortunate in the selection of the replacement Chairmen of its two important working groups.

The Disarmament Commission was created at the first special session on disarmament to provide a forum at which all States Members of the United Nations would have an opportunity to deliberate on major disarmament issues. The idea was that such deliberations could identify the issues and, if possible, prepare the ground for the multilateral disarmament negotiations which were to be undertaken in the Geneva committee — now the Conference on Disarmament.

Some may feel that the Disarmament Commission has not lived to the potential of the role envisaged for it. But then, neither has the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, nor have other disarmament forums and negotiations. The fact is that the success curve of the multilateral disarmament process, after rising at the end of the cold war, declined sharply once the shock of the collapse of the second super-Power was absorbed by the international system.

The maintenance of nuclear deterrence in a multipolar equation is likely to be more complex and difficult than the bipolar balance of terror. In recent years, the levels of security enjoyed by various States have become increasingly asymmetric. Some enjoy absolute security; others, none at all. Asymmetric security is accompanied by asymmetric means of conflict, including the regrettable use of terrorism. Conflicts are still about territory, but increasingly ideology, beliefs and value systems are also being invoked to justify State policy or State conduct, including the acquisition of armaments and the use or threat of use of force.

In the new international circumstances, many of the premises of disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation are being questioned, if not discarded. For instance, the concept of nuclear deterrence has changed from a static, bipolar equation to a dynamic, multipolar calculation involving not two, not five, but at least eight nuclear-weapon States.

The presumption of non-proliferation was an interim endeavour, a commitment by the non-nuclear-weapon States to exercise temporary self-restraint until nuclear disarmament was achieved by all nuclear-weapon States. This is no longer a widely accepted presumption, notwithstanding the Declaration of the most recent Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Reliance on international treaties as a medium for disarmament and arms control has also eroded. The role of multilateral forums, both for deliberation and negotiation, has become stalled, and their scope is narrowing. Even the capabilities of the United Nations for independent analysis of disarmament issues appears to be eroding.

This session of the Disarmament Commission should be utilized to reverse at least some of these disturbing trends, which will significantly erode international and regional peace and stability over the long term. The Disarmament Commission has two items on its agenda, dealing with both nuclear and conventional disarmament. These can be utilized to identify the actions that are required at the international and regional levels in the two areas to revive prospects for effective disarmament and its meaningful contribution to international and regional peace and security.

The Disarmament Commission's identification should lead to closer consideration of these issues, either in this body or elsewhere, and eventually result in agreed approaches and negotiations.

Let me try to attempt an identification of some of these issues which require such closer consideration.

First, in the nuclear arena, the two major nuclear Powers need to quickly ratify and implement the Moscow Treaty. Their nuclear weapons have to be reduced, whether it is done unilaterally, bilaterally or plurilaterally, to a level of rough parity with the other nuclear-weapon States. Thereafter, multilateral nuclear reductions can start and progress rapidly down to what is the commitment — that is, zero.

The commitments undertaken at the NPT Review Conference by the five nuclear-weapon States need to be implemented, and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the fissile material cut-off treaty brought to life again.

Secondly, the implications of the demise of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty and the search for effective missile defences need to be examined in order to ascertain whether a mix of offensive and defensive weapons is consistent with the preservation of stable nuclear deterrence in a multipolar context.

Thirdly, the issue of missiles must be addressed within a comprehensive and — I should like to underline — cooperative framework responsive to the security needs of all concerned States.

Fourthly, commencement of an in-depth examination of a possible multilateral legal instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space may be helpful in developing deterrence stability.

Fifthly, until nuclear disarmament is achieved, credible military, political and legal modalities need to be developed and agreed upon to prevent the deliberate or accidental use of nuclear weapons and to progressively reduce the salience of nuclear weapons in the national defence postures and strategies of all States, especially of the major Powers. In that context, a conference on the reduction of the nuclear danger, as proposed by the Secretary-General, could be useful, as would a legally binding international instrument on negative security assurances and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones where such weapons do not exist.

In the conventional arena, insufficient attention is being paid to the threat to global and regional peace and stability posed by the expansion, proliferation and increasing sophistication of conventional weapons. Military expenditures consume about $900 billion a year, a substantial part of which is spent on the procurement of increasingly sophisticated conventional weapons. The widening gap in technological capabilities and in the size of military budgets between the rich and the poor, the large and the small, is leading to imbalances in conventional force capabilities at the international and regional levels. This asymmetry is increasing the proclivity of the stronger Powers to attempt solutions to conflicts and disputes by recourse to the use of force rather than by the pacific settlement of disputes, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

The principal threats to international peace and security now emanate not from an ongoing strategic confrontation between the major Powers, but from regional conflicts and tensions. It is both the impetus

for global Power status and regional ambitions and confrontations that now fuel the conventional and, often, the nuclear arms race. Special attention, therefore, should be focused on the probable flashpoints of conflicts and confrontation — that is, the Korean peninsula, the Middle East and South Asia. The General Assembly has asked for consideration of principles for conventional disarmament at the regional and subregional levels by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament. This issue is assuming growing urgency. The pacific settlement of disputes is one of the vital principles that need to be promoted in that context.

South Asia has been rightly described as the most dangerous place in the world. The conflict over Jammu and Kashmir festers owing to the non-implementation of Security Council resolutions prescribing the exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Also, the reckless build-up of conventional and strategic weapons by the one State in South Asia that seeks political, military and economic hegemony over the entire subcontinent is escalating tensions and poses a threat to peace and development in other regions.

Pakistan opposes a debilitating arms race in South Asia. We have frozen our defence budget since 1999. However, Pakistan will maintain the credibility of its deterrence posture. The growing imbalance in conventional military capability will have wider strategic implications. It could, among other things, lower the nuclear threshold. It could also escalate the incentives for aggression by the stronger Power.

Pakistan has proposed the establishment of a mutual strategic restraint regime in South Asia, incorporating nuclear as well as conventional arms balance and a political mechanism for the resolution of outstanding disputes and conflicts, especially the core dispute over Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan remains prepared to pursue those proposals at the bilateral level or under United Nations auspices or through third-party mediation.

Mr. Fadaifard (Islamic Republic of Iran): Let me begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Commission of the United Nations. I am sure that your diplomatic skill, coupled with professional assistance from the Secretariat, will ensure the success of this session. I should also like to express my delegation's gratitude to the former Chairpersons of the Working Groups for their tireless efforts and to welcome the newly appointed Chairmen of those Groups. My sincere thanks and appreciation go also to Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, Under- Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, whose dedication has always been a great help in achieving the best possible results of our endeavours.

Major developments that have taken place in the international arena since the Commission began its deliberations in 2000 on ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and on practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms have demonstrated the wisdom and timeliness of the Commission's choice of the two substantive items currently on its agenda.

The events of 2001 showed clearly that, more than ever before, the maintenance of security requires collective efforts and international unity in combating the menace of terrorism in all its forms. They demonstrated once again that multilateralism within the framework of the United Nations is the most appropriate approach to the maintenance of international peace and security. However, there has been a tendency towards unilateralism, towards the recourse to arbitrarily imposed prescriptions and towards a reliance on military power rather than on collective security. That, in turn, has undermined the unity of purpose that emerged at the international level in the wake of the 11 September 2001 tragedy.

Anticipating that such a trend could lead to division within the United Nations — particularly in the field of disarmament — the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement proposed a draft resolution on the promotion of multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation that was adopted by the General Assembly at its current session as resolution 57/63. That resolution reaffirmed that multilateralism is the core principle in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. However, a powerful State's disregard for the international community's call, its shunning of multilateral agreements and its growing preference for unilateral approaches has resulted in the regrettable situation we are witnessing in Iraq today.

Nuclear disarmament has always been the highest priority of the international community. The very first resolution adopted by the General Assembly at its first session, on 24 January 1946, called for the total

elimination of atomic bombs. It is also a firm belief of Member States that the total elimination of nuclear arsenals is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons. Despite the optimism and hope that followed the end of the cold war and the achievements made in the area of disarmament — especially the conclusion of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the negotiations on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention, the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals — the emergence of unilateralism has reversed the trend and caused hope to fade away.

Indeed, the setbacks began when many previous undertakings were questioned by one nuclear-weapon State. The emergence of a new doctrine on the first-use of nuclear weapons on the pretext of pre-emptive attacks, the revitalization of an advanced development programme for nuclear weapons, plans for the development of a new generation of nuclear weapons and the growing risk of a linkage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction were then added to the previous negative developments. The recent intention to lower the nuclear threshold by removing internal barriers regarding the use of nuclear weapons, even as a possibility, has served particularly to deteriorate the situation. It has also served to increase the likelihood that other nuclear-weapon States will follow suit to lower their own thresholds and employ nuclear weapons in situations where they simply need a stronger military punch. That may simply have a domino effect with regard to first-use of nuclear weapons by nuclear-weapon States.

As a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly composed of all States Members of the United Nations and having the task of considering and making recommendations on various problems in the field of disarmament, the Disarmament Commission is now in its third substantive session in the cycle of deliberations on the subject of nuclear disarmament. The Commission should play its important role by once again calling for the implementation of the unequivocal undertaking of nuclear-weapons States, under article VI of the NPT, to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament, as agreed in 2000 by NPT member States. Certainly, that can only be done if there is political will.

As a matter of fact, the practical steps to be taken in that regard have already been set out by the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Among those steps, we can mention the establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of an appropriate subsidiary body with a mandate to conclude a comprehensive nuclear-weapons convention that includes a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons in a specified period of time. In the meantime, the international community should strive to achieve the universality of the NPT and should spare no efforts in realizing that interim goal. The international community should also urge those outside of this international instrument to adhere to it immediately and unconditionally. In that regard, we welcome the recent accession of Cuba to the NPT. We hope that others will follow suit.

One of the important steps to be taken before achieving a world free from nuclear weapons is to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. The Disarmament Commission properly realized the significance of this issue in 1999, and unanimously adopted guidelines on the establishment of such zones. There have been many positive first efforts along these lines. The Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, as well as the Declaration adopted at Almaty by the five States of the Central Asian region and Mongolia's declaration on the subject are all well-developed and concerted steps in this regard.

With regard to the sensitive and strategic region of the Middle East, in 1974, Iran was the first country to include a proposal in the agenda of the General Assembly for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region. Since then, the Assembly has adopted a resolution on this issue every year. The indefinite extension of the NPT at the 1995 Review Conference was made possible only when a resolution on the Middle East was adopted by consensus. The only existing obstacle to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is the non-adherence of Israel to the NPT and its continued clandestine operation of unsafeguarded nuclear facilities. That is taking place with the help and technological assistance of a certain nuclear-weapon State, in contravention of all its international obligations. Israel has paid no attention to the constant international calls emanating from various forums —

particularly from the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which by name called upon that regime to accede to the NPT immediately and unconditionally. That regime has never been a party to internationally negotiated instruments on weapons of mass destruction, namely, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the NPT.

I would now like to touch upon an important issue in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation that is of a great significance to my delegation. All international instruments in this field have duly recognized the inalienable right of their States parties to peaceful applications of materials and technology; no such treaties are drafted in such a way as to hamper or hinder the economic development of their States parties.

Unlike the non-State-party in the region, the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a party to Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological Weapons Convention and the NPT, is firmly committed to all provisions of those instruments. While being transparent, making declarations and accepting international monitoring by the competent international bodies, the Islamic Republic of Iran has always stated that it would not abandon its rights as a result of politically motivated accusations or outside pressures. In accordance with the provisions of article IV of the NPT, all States parties to the Treaty have the inalienable right to develop their research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination.

We believe that the unimpeded access of developing countries to materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes is an internationally recognized right of States parties. Any proliferation concern is best addressed through multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory agreements. Compliance is a two-way street, and those who call for it should also consider the matter in all its aspects. When it comes to the fullest possible exchange of material and technological information for peaceful purposes or the undertakings of nuclear-weapon States with regard to nuclear disarmament, all parties should abide by their obligations under articles IV and VI. This is a commitment which, 35 years after the conclusion of the NPT in 1968, has yet to be implemented. The Disarmament Commission, as the universal disarmament body with the full participation of all Member States, is expected to contribute to realizing this lofty goal of the international community.

One of the ways which has been singled out by this Commission as strengthening international peace and security is its second agenda item, "Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms", which is also an area of high importance on the disarmament and international security agenda. Certainly, confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms should not divert attention from disarmament, but it can create, in some specific circumstances, an atmosphere conducive to progress in this field. If some party in a region were not ready to renounce weapons of mass destruction, as we are witnessing in the Middle East, there would certainly not be so much use for these kinds of measures.

In the areas where these practical steps are applicable, confidence-building measures can be known by various terms. Transparency and openness in various military matters, including military holdings and expenditures, are all possible means that, in a given situation, could reduce uncertainties and mistrust. The Islamic Republic of Iran has been working with its neighbours along these lines and some agreements have already been concluded between the ministries of defence of the concerned countries. It is our firm policy to extend and continue this trend.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): It is a pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over the 2003 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. I wish to express my delegation's full confidence that you will be able to guide the meeting to a successful conclusion. I also take this opportunity to felicitate the new members of the Bureau and the Chairmen of the Working Groups.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his comprehensive remarks at the beginning of this debate and for the excellent contribution he has made to disarmament in his past and present capacities.

We are gathered here amidst the crying need for accelerated disarmament and a series of setbacks in global efforts in this realm. In the midst of growing tensions in the global community, the number of

countries with nuclear-weapons capabilities and other weapons of mass destruction has steadily increased. Treaties that ensured strategic stability for so many years in the past have been flouted and even discarded. It is quite disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree on its programme of work for the past five years. Last year, even this Commission was not able to have its substantive session.

The tenth special session of the General Assembly in 1978 arrived at a consensus on broad parameters to pursue the goal of disarmament, eloquently underlining multilateral efforts in this area, particularly in the field of nuclear disarmament. While the subsequent special sessions of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament could not make much headway, and two even failed to reach a consensus, they did provide the framework to promote the disarmament agenda. The Millennium Summit was yet another forum at which world leaders made resolute commitments to eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

Equipped with elaborate practical guidelines to assist member States in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, the Disarmament Commission should move forward, building on its long experience and expertise. In this regard, we commend the role played by the Commission thus far and hope that the current session will set the tone for the fourth special session on disarmament, which has become necessary in order to examine the whole question of disarmament.

Nepal has always been an ardent advocate of complete and general disarmament, particularly that of nuclear weapons. We are of the view that peace and security will remain a distant dream until the planet Earth gets rid of all nuclear weapons.

Although the agreement between the United States and the Russian Federation to reduce the deployment of strategic nuclear weapons is welcome, it gives us little comfort that monstrous weapons capable of destroying our planet several times over still exist. Keeping the commitments of the nuclear-weapon States to nuclear disarmament within a timeline and of non-nuclear-weapon States not to acquire those lethal weapons will be crucial to making this world a safer place for us and for our children.

Clearly, we need to have a series of confidence-building measures to develop a strong sense of trust that is absolutely vital in achieving the ultimate goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free world. But the recent erosion in strategic stability and the proliferation of nuclear weapons has fostered growing disappointment and frustration. The international community has not yet witnessed the entry into force of Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the proposed fissile material cut-off treaty is yet to get off the ground. In this connection, I am happy to state that His Majesty's Government of Nepal is positively considering becoming a party to the CTBT.

The spread of ever-more lethal small arms and light weapons, particularly among non-State actors, deepens people's frustration in the field of disarmament. The Programme of Action emanating from the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001 is welcome, but falls short of our expectations.

We all agree that regional initiatives for disarmament can positively contribute to consolidating confidence-building measures within the region. Transparency, sharing information, dialogue and bringing experts together to forge better understanding are as important to reinforcing confidence as are a series of steps designed to prevent alarm and surprise and to reduce threat through disarmament. Regional centres for peace and disarmament, including the one that is supposed to work from Kathmandu, have a critical role to play in this process. Nepal is taking measures to relocate the Regional Centre for Asia and the Pacific, still based in New York, to Kathmandu as soon as possible.

Nepal believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones would greatly assist in regional confidence-building. We therefore strongly support the Bangkok, Rarotonga, Tlatelolco and Pelindaba Treaties as means for promoting peace and security.

I am happy to report that Nepal has a strong moral commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We also favour the full implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the small arms Conference in 2001 and making it more comprehensive and effective as we go forward.

My delegation feels that we should bring to bear more commitment and political will to achieve the objectives of eliminating nuclear weapons within a reasonable timeline. Selective and half-hearted disarmament efforts will only breed resentment and prompt non-nuclear-weapon States to acquire those horrendous weapons. Sustained efforts to rid the world of chemical and biological weapons should also receive our constant attention.

We would like to put on record that Nepal is unequivocally opposed to the arms race in outer space. Outer space must remain free of deadly weapons. To achieve those objectives, we must mobilize all resources and forums we have at our disposal. The Conference on Disarmament, the sole multilateral negotiating forum, should play a leading role in our disarmament endeavours. We need to activate that forum without delay and begin negotiations on matters and areas of priority that should advance the agenda of nuclear disarmament.

We firmly believe that the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provides practical steps for the way forward for nuclear disarmament. The suggestions put forward by the outgoing Chairpersons of the two Working Groups provide us with a useful basis to try to reach common ground to advance that goal.

Regional measures for nuclear disarmament and confidence-building should continue to receive our encouragement. Robust monitoring and verification measures need to be put in place to monitor and ensure compliance in the area of weapons of mass destruction.

We need to strengthen the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and expand its scope to make it more comprehensive and more meaningful.

My own region is fraught with dangers of a nuclear showdown. We appreciate the steps taken towards developing confidence-building measures and urge that more be done in this area to ease the fear of potential catastrophes.

For many, peace has become an interlude between conflicts and wars. We should all work together to ensure that lasting peace prevails, not just for a privileged few but for all humanity. Selective disarmament has invited frequent disasters. What we need for lasting and dependable peace and security is comprehensive disarmament and a culture of peace in which security is promoted not by mutual threats but by mutual understanding, confidence and cooperation.

Mr. McGinnis (United States of America): Permit me at the outset of my remarks to formally congratulate both you, Sir, and Italy on your assumption of the chairmanship of the Disarmament Commission. Your effective stewardship of this body is already moving us in the right direction as we address the important issues of this body, and you can count on the full support of the United States delegation.

Allow me also to thank Ghana and Argentina for their significant efforts to advance the work of the Disarmament Commission and to express our appreciation to our Egyptian and Brazilian colleagues for their willingness to assume the Working Group chairmanships on short notice.

And, as he prepares to take his leave, we would like to wish every future success to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, and to convey our abiding respect for his many contributions to the international community.

It is clear to all that the international security environment has changed dramatically since the Disarmament Commission last met in substantive session in 2001. And in point of fact, the international political situation of today is substantially changed from that of 25 or 50 years ago. That is why we believe that it is imperative for the Disarmament Commission to focus its efforts on the realities of today, of 2003, and on those of the future. It serves no one's interest to advocate approaches that no longer track with the current international situation and the new directions in which it may be heading.

We need to acknowledge that we live in a changed world, one faced with new threats to international security. In the days ahead, we will be urging the Disarmament Commission to emphasize forward-looking thinking that takes into account the past without dwelling in it.

It is essential that we build confidence — confidence that the security of the States represented here will be preserved and enhanced. An important question to be addressed is how the international community should acknowledge and deal with the current security situation. For example, we believe that

there has been significant recent progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament since the last meeting of the Commission. Most notable are the substantial efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce their nuclear arsenals. The Moscow Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions strengthens international security and stability not just for today but for the next 10 years of its implementation.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that weapons of mass destruction programmes in a number of States and the risk that terrorists may one day soon acquire weapons of mass destruction on their own pose serious challenges to international peace and security.

The Disarmament Commission's work should also take into account that moving forward on disarmament requires that parties to existing treaties fulfil their obligations and that existing treaty regimes be kept viable through vigorous enforcement of compliance.

We should also encourage confidence-building measures that contribute to regional and international peace and security. My delegation will work within Working Group II to help achieve that goal.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that effective multilateralism, including at the Disarmament Commission, will be critical if together we are to deal with the growing challenges to international peace, security and stability. The United States looks forward to contributing to that effort.

Let me take this opportunity to respond briefly to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As I noted earlier, moving forward on disarmament requires that parties to existing treaties fulfil their obligations. North Korea is in breach of its international non-proliferation obligations. The United States feels strongly that this is an issue of concern to the entire international community. We seek a multilateral diplomatic solution and for North Korea to return to compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and its safeguards agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The Chairman: I now give the floor to Mrs. Janice Miller, the representative of Jamaica, who is representing my predecessor in my present job. I would like to take this opportunity once again to express appreciation for the work Ambassador Quarless did and for her fruitful suggestions, which we hope to validate in our session during April.

Mrs. Miller (Jamaica): Jamaica joins previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman at this session of the Disarmament Commission. We are confident that under your able guidance the deliberations of the Commission will arrive at a successful outcome. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election.

Allow me to express my Government's appreciation of those delegations which were so kind as to acknowledge the role played by Jamaica, represented by Mrs. Diane Quarless, as Chair at the previous session of the Commission. Jamaica remains committed to the aims and objectives of the Commission and expresses the hope that this year's session will continue to build on consensus, develop guidelines and make concrete recommendations regarding ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament and practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms.

Jamaica also associates itself with the statement made earlier by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Disarmament and non-proliferation are integral to the maintenance of international peace and security, and confidence-building measures are critical to the strengthening of a multilateral framework for the advancement of the disarmament agenda. The role of the United Nations in securing a stable and peaceful environment through the removal of threats to the peace is thus of intrinsic importance to the pursuit of both confidence-building and disarmament.

The contribution of the Disarmament Commission towards the achievement of those objectives through substantive discussions and practical recommendations is therefore of continued relevance and great value. The General Assembly has repeatedly affirmed that the Disarmament Commission remains the specialized deliberative body within the United Nations which allows for detailed examination of specific disarmament issues. The opportunity afforded by this universal body for dialogue and an exchange of views is integral to the process of confidence-building and disarmament.

Jamaica therefore underscores the worth of this Commission as a multilateral forum which establishes, promotes and elaborates global disarmament norms. The importance of the setting of global disarmament norms is relevant in the current international environment, where the disarmament agenda continues to be challenged, despite limited progress in certain areas. Jamaica continues to believe that the achievement of a stable and peaceful international environment demands the continued commitment of the international community to general and complete disarmament and to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

We note that there has been recent progress on certain key disarmament issues, including the conclusion of agreements on reductions of strategic nuclear weapons, as well as the increased adherence by States, including nuclear-weapon States, to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards and the related Additional Protocol. While welcoming these developments, Jamaica is of the view that such efforts should be bolstered by increased adherence to and universalization of the relevant international legal instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We continue to express the view that all countries have responsibilities and obligations under the NPT, including in the implementation of the 13 practical steps agreed to at the 2000 Review Conference.

The development of practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms is critical, particularly in the light of the increased threat of war and conflict. The role of such weapons in creating the conditions for and exacerbating conflict is undisputed and has a signal effect on international peace and security. The relative ease of access to and the portability of these weapons poses a security dilemma for many States. This factor must be weighed against the right of States to defend themselves. Unfortunately, such considerations have come at the expense of human life and have led to untold suffering.

This situation underscores the role of confidence-building measures as an important component in the prevention of war. The increased security which is obtained through transparency, openness and accountability in military matters therefore does much to enhance international stability.

Jamaica supports efforts to arrive at practical disarmament measures through the establishment of internationally agreed guidelines to govern the manufacture, development, sale and acquisition of conventional weapons. In our view, the importance of confidence-building measures in this area cannot be overemphasized. It is for us, as members of the Commission, to find our way to common ground on the scope and applicability of these measures, so that the debate on the range of issues which remain a challenge in the field of practical disarmament can be taken to the next level. Jamaica looks forward to the deliberations of the Commission on this important issue.

Jamaica welcomes the convening of the first biennial meeting of States on the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in July 2003, as an important step in the area of practical disarmament and confidence-building.

In conclusion, allow me to take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation to the outgoing Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, for his leadership and unswerving commitment to the achievement of progress in the field of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, and for his efforts in particular in promoting greater participation by developing countries in the critical area of disarmament, which is the foundation for the advancement in the Organization of international peace and security. We wish him well in his future endeavours.

The Chairman: A number of delegations have asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply; I shall call on them now.

Mr. Lew (Republic of Korea): My delegation regrets that the representative of North Korea misrepresented, at length, the nature of the Republic of Korea-United States combined exercise. This annual exercise is not a world exercise; it is of a defensive nature — there is no aggressive intention. Moreover, the Government of the Republic of Korea gave prior notification of the exercise to the relevant North Korean authorities.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like first of all to respond to the statement made by the representative of the United States. As the United States is to blame for

spawning the nuclear problem on the Korean peninsula, leading to its worst phase yet, there is no need for the international community to worry about the decision of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The Government of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has already clarified that, although it has withdrawn from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it has no will to produce nuclear weapons, and its nuclear activities will be confined at the present stage to the production of electricity. If the United States had not included the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — a sovereign State — as part of an "axis of evil" and as a target for pre-emptive nuclear attack, in wanton violation of the NPT and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea-United States Agreed Framework, such a crisis would not have occurred.

The reference of the United States to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's admission of its nuclear development is nothing but the product of a despicable premeditated plot hatched by the United States. It is the United States itself that has systematically violated the NPT and made it a dead letter. The United States, as a depositary State, committed itself not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States that acceded to the Treaty. But it has wantonly violated that commitment. That caused a nuclear crisis on the Korean peninsula in 1993, as the Commission well knows. The issue can therefore be resolved only through negotiations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, which is responsible for the problem.

Nevertheless, the Bush Administration took a negative approach to what had been achieved with regard to improving relations between the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States during the preceding Administration, and once again escalated the nuclear threat against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. In a systematic violation of the official agreement reached by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States, the Administration stopped the supply of heavy oil — the only commitment that had been implemented — thus breaking the basic promise made for the resolution of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

As we saw earlier, the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula came about because of the nuclear threat posed by the United States, the assailant of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — the victim. This is an issue of a bilateral nature that can be resolved peacefully by the parties concerned through negotiations. The impression was created, for the benefit of international public opinion, that this was an international issue of universal significance related to the fate of the NPT. This was because the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), having discarded the principle of impartiality appropriate to an international organization, served as a tool for carrying out the hostile policy of the United States towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This was also attributable to wrong thinking and negative actions on the part of some countries, which blindly followed the lead of the United States, attempting to read its intentions and currying favour with it, giving priority to their unilateral interests and relations with the United States — the only super-Power in the world.

This tendency should be eradicated, as it is contrary to international justice and to the genuine desire and will of humankind for peace, security and stability in the world. Failing that, the United Nations and the international community will continue to serve the unilateral interests of the United States, giving it a chance to fish in troubled waters, and will thereby be unable to represent the genuine interests and desires of sovereign States and peoples or to defend their national dignity and sovereignty.

Regarding the remarks made by the representative of South Korea, I would like to comment very briefly.

The Foal Eagle joint military exercise and Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration exercise of the United States and South Korea, now under way in South Korea, which is targeting the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, is a preliminary to another Korean war.

We cannot but take a serious view of the large-scale frantic race towards nuclear war — a preliminary war against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea staged by the United States on the sidelines of the Iraqi war. It is becoming certain that, if the United States invasion of Iraq is successful, it will wage a new war of aggression on the Korean peninsula, or move the staging of its anti-terrorist war to the high street on the Korean peninsula, thus invading the Democratic People's Republic of Korea after occupying Iraq. In this context, large-scale war exercises could turn into real war at any time.

At the beginning of the new century, following the 11 September incidents, the Bush Administration formulated an anti-terrorist strategy as its military strategy of the twenty-first century. The opening act was the Afghanistan war, and the second the Iraq war. There is no doubt that the third act will be on the Korean peninsula, but it should clearly understand that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is neither Afghanistan nor Iraq.

South Korea should ponder such acts of treachery as hamstringing efforts to de-implement the June 15 Joint Declaration and joining groups of foreign forces in their attempts to stifle Koreans by force.

The Chairman: I should like to remind delegations that I have full respect for their positions. However, the rule is that the first right of reply is limited to five minutes and the second to three minutes. This should also serve as a reminder for the continuation of our debate tomorrow.

The meeting rose at 5.50 p.m.